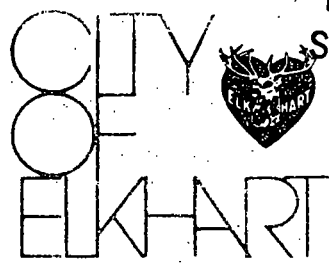




MAYOR'S OFFICE
(219) 294-5471



JAMES P. PERRON, Mayor

PRELIMINARY COPY
SUBJECT TO REVIEW

MUNICIPAL BUILDING
229 SO. SECOND STREET
ELKHART, INDIANA 46516

December 30, 1987

"Draft" Joint Press Release by Mayor Perron, Ken Theisen,
U.S.EPA/Rick Brown, Elkhart County Health Department, Groundwater
Section

This joint press release is issued in response to questions received from residents of the southwest and west neighborhoods of Elkhart with regard to recent contamination plume discoveries. The EPA Emergency Response Group under the direction of Mr. Ken Theisen, U.S.EPA Region V, have been activated as a result of further sampling by private parties as well as the Elkhart County Health Department. Within the contamination area there are three degrees of impact of the contamination plume with actions by EPA in accordance with the level of contamination:

1. Homes with extremely high concentrations of TCE or other volatile organic compounds. There are two such homes which have been hooked up to City water to mitigate the immediate health threat.
2. There are approximately thirteen homes which have had TCE in excess of 50% of the response level of 148 ppb or 50% of the TCA reaction level of 500 ppb. In these cases, point of use filters have been installed by EPA as a short term solution to the problem. Alternately,

the EPA, in the past, used to supply bottled water, but found the logistics of this approach to be burdensome and the filters were equally effective in addressing the problem in the short term. The point of use filters may or may not be part of the long term solution for these residences. This will be determined after additional sampling in the Spring of 1988.

3. The third category of impact are those that are in the vicinity of the contamination plume, but have either less than 50% of the health advisory level for TCE or other volatile organic compounds, or perhaps have no contamination at all present in their private well at this time. In these cases the homeowners have still received precautionary letters from the Elkhart County Health Department advising them of the fact that there is a contamination plume in their area. These people need to understand that in the Spring of 1988 the EPA will conduct additional sampling and testing and determine what the appropriate long term solution is to address immediate and projected health threats, due to the moving contaminate plume.

The EPA has initiated discussions with the City of Elkhart and the Elkhart Water Works regarding extension of mains into the effected areas. The EPA, working with the Health Department Groundwater Section, will supply the City of Elkhart with a specific

list of homes and businesses effected by the contaminate plumes so that there will be sufficient information on the length of water mains involved, the cost of installation and number of households effected, so that the Mayor might consider a petition to the Public Service Commission for waivers of water main assessments in these areas.

The EPA is empowered to pay for on-site plumbing as well as any new construction related to water mains, however, they are not allowed to pay the water main assessment charge. When this quirk in the law was discovered, as a result of the East Jackson contaminant plume, Mayor Perron petitioned the Public Service Commission for a water main assessment waiver for the effected households and this in fact was granted. Mayor Perron indicated that he was willing to provide an even-handed treatment in this case, but needed to have more specific information from the EPA on the extent of the problem before preparing such a petition to the Public Service Commission. At this point, there are only two households effected and there is a great deal of work involved with preparing the petition, so no action will be forthcoming until after the EPA investigation of extent of contamination is completed in the Spring of 1988.

As a closing comment, it was pointed out that if you have received a notification letter, but have not been hooked up to City water or given a point of use filter by the EPA, but still are concerned about the quality of your water from your private well, then you might consider the following activities:

1. Purchasing bottled water
2. Agitating your water in a blender with the top removed
3. Boiling of water
4. Tap water carbon filter systems
5. Additional sampling or testing of your water to determine more accurately the extent of possible organic presence.